

MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

MID-ATLANTIC REGION SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS HOSPITAL WIC PROGRAM ADVOCATES FOR REFUGEE FAMILIES

By Anita Otokiti, WIC Director

New Jersey's Trinitas Hospital WIC assumed a proactive role serving as an advocate and facilitator for refugee families. Living in a refugee camp is the only home known to many of the Burmese families who recently arrived in NJ's Union County. Working with the International Rescue Committee, over 120 families from Burma were assisted in navigating through the health care system and other community programs.

Burma, also known as Myanmar, is the largest country in southeast Asia and has been essentially hidden from world view since a military coup in 1962. The Karen people are generally thought of as one of the Mongolian tribes from central Asia including China and Thailand. Health care is among the most limited in the world. Food security remains a critical problem as the government restricts access and aid into the hills of Burma. Community-based organizations often serve as the main support for the families.

Trinitas WIC Director Anita Otokiti organized a meeting with the following community organizations:



YOUR NEW HOME — Trinitas Hospital WIC hosts special sessions for refugee families in Union County.

Continued on page 2

VIRGINIA'S PRINCE WILLIAM WIC REACHES OUT TO LOCAL MILITARY

On May 7, Virginia's Prince William WIC participated in a four-hour Health Expo event held on the grounds outside the Quantico Fitness Center. Nutritionist Associates Emily Kovacs and Maria Velasco provided eligibility information and benefit overview to military families in attendance.

The local office created a special "Quantico Enrollment Day" in the computer schedule to facilitate rapid access to WIC services for families attending the Health Expo. The event yielded 37 new enrollees, over 40% of them pregnant, from the military community that will receive WIC benefits.

Elizabeth Hurst is our Health Educator who is the one responsible for making the Comcast and Panorama Latino contacts for us. ■



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE — WIC Nutritionist Associates Emily Kovacs (left) and Maria Velasco (right) are flanked by members of the US military who participated in the Health Expo held at Quantico.

CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATED AT COMMUNITY PROGRESS COUNCIL, INC. WIC PROGRAM IN YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

By Barbara Graham, Outreach/Retail Store Coordinator

Community Progress Council, Inc. WIC Program in York, PA, celebrated Cinco de Mayo on May 4. Nutrition Education Coordinator Rebecca May and some of the other nutrition staff volunteered to make bean dishes using canned beans to promote this new addition to the WIC food package on October 1. The WIC participants enjoyed sampling these dishes and received five recipes to take home.

We hope you enjoy a few of the recipes!



YUMMY — WIC participant Sylmarie Rios tastes the day's offerings.

Breakfast Bean Cookies

2 cups oats
1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
1 (15 oz) can white kidney beans
¼ cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup chocolate chips
½ cup raisins or dried cranberries
¼ - ½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
2 tablespoons ground flax seeds (optional)

Continued on page 6

SUMMER 2009

- Harford/Cecil County (MD) WIC Opens Hospital-Based ClinicPage 3
- Meet Delaware WIC's New EmployeePage 5
- DC WIC Workplace Produce Challenge For National Nutrition MonthPage 6
- Virginia's Peninsula Health District Celebrates Breastfeeding MothersPage 9
- New Jersey's Trinitas WIC Celebrates Breastfeeding WeekPage 11



NEWS FROM THE USDA: AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDS AVAILABLE TO MID-ATLANTIC STATE AGENCIES

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was signed into law by President Obama on February 17. It is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, create or save millions of jobs, and address long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century.

The ARRA provides a total of \$500 million for the WIC Program. Of that amount, \$400 million has been provided to support participation should the Secretary of Agriculture determine that costs or participation exceed budget estimates. So far this fiscal year, four Mid-Atlantic State agencies (District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico) have received over \$15 million to support increasing participation levels and food costs.

The ARRA also provides \$100 million for State agencies to establish, improve, or administer management information systems, including changes necessary to meet new legislative or regulatory requirements such as the WIC food package. In order to competitively distribute the funds, four Requests for Applications (RFAs) were recently released. Each RFA solicited proposals from WIC State agencies for specific types of grants including State Agency Model (SAM) transfer grants, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) planning grants, EBT implementation grants, and miscellaneous technology-related grants.

The funds will allow Mid-Atlantic States to begin new initiatives such as WIC EBT, expand current projects, and move forward with existing initiatives. Grant awards will be announced in late summer so look for updates on Mid-Atlantic State agency funded projects in future issues of MARWIC TIMES.

Additional information regarding the ARRA can be found at www.Recovery.gov. Additional information regarding the ARRA and WIC can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/recovery/recovery-wic.htm>. ■

LOCAL PENNSYLVANIA WIC PARTICIPANT CALLS BREASTFEEDING "AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE"

By Doreen Scarmack, CPA, Breastfeeding Coordinator
Shenango Valley Urban League WIC Program, Farrell, PA

Shenango Valley Urban League (PA) WIC participant Betty Jo Chrestay has been breastfeeding her children since 1997! She has six children, five of whom have breastfed a minimum of 10 months. Some of her children have been breastfed up to 17 months. The only child who was not breastfed is an adopted daughter.

Betty Jo says, "Breastfeeding is an amazing experience. It allows you to nourish and bond with your baby. My favorite part is when they smile up at you while nursing." She is pregnant again and plans to breastfeed again!

WIC staff appreciates her advocacy for breastfeeding. ■



BREAST IS BEST FOR THIS BROOD — Betty Jo Chrestay and three of her children.



MARWIC TIMES is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, Mid-Atlantic Region Office as a discretionary project of New Jersey WIC.

Mary Mickles, MS, RDProject Manager
Jean MalloyActing NJ WIC Director
Christina BalasCreative Director
Lisa ArnoldEditor

Please submit articles or story ideas for
MARWIC TIMES to your State Editor
at the State WIC Office Address.

DelawareLaura Peppelman
District of ColumbiaAnne Spaulding
MarylandConnie Webster
New JerseyMary Mickles
PennsylvaniaBonnie Mellott
Puerto RicoAlma Ortega
Virgin IslandsLorna Concepcion
VirginiaCarol Bell
West VirginiaHeidi Staats
MARO, USDADelores Stewart

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy WIC is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

New Jersey's Trinitas Hospital continued from page 1

Trinitas Hospital WIC and Community Initiatives, International Rescue Committee, First Baptist Church of Elizabeth, First Baptist Church of Newark, Burma United Nation Service Office and Karen family members. The formation of the International Rescue Committee, a new service in Union County, was vital in alerting other programs, such as the health department, to facilitate service coordination.

Trinitas WIC organized special sessions to enroll the eligible women and children. As the waiting room filled with curious children, "this opportunity to provide service to such a vulnerable population was a gift to us," described Otokiti. A translator assisted, transportation was provided and many volunteers offered to help. It was a WIC registration nightmare as we learned that the families only had first names. Immigration randomly assigned last names without regard to keeping families linked together. WIC staff tried to prepare by having language-appropriate material available. Thirty-eight women and children were enrolled during the first event on March 21, 2008. Overcoming the language and culture barriers were easy in comparison to developing techniques to address health and nutrition education. WIC nutritionists prepared food demonstrations and introduced the children to milk and peanut butter. WIC nutritionists became familiar with the Burmese diet and culture in order to illustrate how to integrate the new foods into their diet. WIC employees and community volunteers assisted the families while shopping in the grocery stores. A local retail vendor was very accommodating. The concept of store brand verses national brand was absolutely meaningless as we filled the carts. Food safety and preparation was provided during home visits. Grilled cheese sandwiches were a favorite.

Referrals for medical and dental care, housing, food, clothing, furniture, education and other services were made. The education component was complimented as ESL (English-as-a-Second-Language) was provided at churches and in the hospital. The families have become familiar with faces and places and they have become advocates for WIC. The struggle remains for the refugee families and many organizations continue to embrace them. One such gesture is from Sister Marion Scranton, Vice President, Community Initiatives, who provides gift certificates for groceries and Reverend Diana Brown, First Baptist Church of Elizabeth, who assists with services and space for education programs.

Our agency has learned many lessons from this experience in regard to overcoming cultural and language barriers. It appears that the families were receiving amazing benefits including job placement, housing, medical assistance, shelter, food and supplies. These particular refugees have no support system in the area. Under the International Rescue Committee, they are provided benefits for four months, and then they are supposed to become "self sufficient." It is with pride that we boast of the services provided by WIC and that the children may be eligible up to five years of age. WIC has become a contributing factor in assisting families in our nation to acquire the status of "self sufficiency." ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH CABELL WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH WITH OPENING OF NEW WIC OFFICE

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD, and Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Valley Health Cabell WIC office hosted an open house to celebrate the opening of its new clinic in Huntington, WV. The new WIC clinic is located in a more centralized area of Cabell County with bus access, and easy access from the interstate I-64 and State Route 60. Prior to the opening of the new clinic, the Cabell WIC office had been attached to a Valley Health medical clinic. Due to the medical center expansion and the WIC Program need for additional space to serve an increasing caseload, WIC Director Mary Caldwell submitted an infrastructure proposal to USDA to build a new WIC facility. The Program was awarded Operational Assistance Funds to build the new clinic.

This new site has over 3600 square feet and includes a waiting room, reception area, intake office, two medical rooms, three nutrition offices, breastfeeding peer counselor office, copy and mail room, several large storage/resource rooms, a group education room with demonstration kitchen, a kiosk room for touch screen nutrition education, and administrative offices for the nutrition coordinator and WIC director. This new office allows clinic staff to serve more participants and provide better customer service with less wait time.

Over 40 people attended the open house celebration. Attendees included State WIC Director Dr. Denise Ferris, Assistant State WIC Director Cindy Pillo, Valley Health (parent agency) CEO Steve Shattls, and Valley Health WIC Director Mary Caldwell. Some of the local outreach partners attending the celebration included representatives from the Cabell Family Resource Network, Birth to Three, Birthright Services, River Valley Family Daycare Food Program and Head Start Program. The celebration included a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by speakers. Mr. Shattls welcomed guests, praised staff, and offered a history of Valley Health WIC in this area. Dr. Ferris spoke of the services that Valley Health WIC employees provide to participants within the local agency and noted that this office is the second largest in the state and serves 3,000 participants. Ms. Pillo



A GRATEFUL BUNCH — Valley Health Systems Cabell WIC Program staff is appreciative of the new 3600 square foot clinic to accommodate increasing program participation.

praised the work of the staff and the efforts of all who saw this project to completion; and Ms. Caldwell gave appreciation to the local staff and thanks to the State office for helping to make this office a reality. Staff conducted tours of the new facility and offered light refreshments and packets with WIC information.

Valley Health Systems has administered the WIC Program in this region for 25 years and provides services to more than 12,000 participants in eight clinics in six counties. The Program currently serves an estimated 71% of the Medicaid recipients that are eligible to receive WIC benefits. With the opening of this new clinic site, goals have been set to continue to increase participation and caseload. The local WIC staff and participants are very appreciative of the new clinic space. ■



IT TAKES A PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD A WIC CLINIC — (Left to right) Steve Shattls, CEO of the Valley Health Systems; Dr. Denise Ferris, WV WIC Director; and Mary Caldwell, Valley Health Systems WIC Director, celebrated the opening of the second largest WIC clinic in West Virginia.

HARFORD/CECIL COUNTY (MARYLAND) WIC OPENS HOSPITAL-BASED CLINIC

By Tariro Savoy, Nutrition Program Trainee
Harford County WIC Program

"This is great. Now I don't have to worry about calling the office for an appointment. Thank you."

This is a typical comment made by clients seen at the new WIC clinic open at Upper Chesapeake Medical Center (UCMC) in Bel Air, Maryland. This venture began March 9 after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the WIC Program and the Medical Center. The agreement provides for a WIC CPA to certify new moms and babies at the hospital on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Working at UCMC involves outreach to women who are not currently on the Program, recertification of women who are currently enrolled, and certifications of their new babies. A typical day begins with obtaining a list of new babies from Admissions or the Lactation Consultant and then visiting the rooms to talk about WIC with the new moms. Eligible moms are scheduled for appointments and given the nutrition history and breastfeeding referral forms to complete. At the time of appointment a cart with a laptop that has wireless internet access and a printer is wheeled into the rooms and the certifications for mom and baby begin. For those found ineligible, the WIC outreach brochure is provided, and they are encouraged to give WIC a call if their circumstances change or to pass the information to family or friends.

With the new food package changes coming in October, breastfeeding moms are already being encouraged to give only breast milk in the first month and are certified as Breastfeeding Exclusive. So far these moms have been very receptive even though some may have been planning to request formula – probably because of the excellent breastfeeding support available to them from WIC peer counselors and the hospital lactation consultants.

The certification appointment has minimal challenges. Sometimes mom may be tired or her visitors distract her. There may also be interruptions from medical personnel or support services but the appointment is still successful. The coming months will continue to be a matter of trial and error in order to come up with more efficient ways of providing WIC services. For now, UCMC WIC will continue to help new moms make better nutrition choices for a brighter future! ■

PENNSYLVANIA'S FAYETTE COUNTY WIC PARTICIPATES IN "MUNCH, MINGLE AND MOVE!"

By Betty Zackal, Fayette County WIC Director and Outreach Coordinator

On April 18, Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) WIC Program in Uniontown, PA, presented eight workshop sessions at the Fayette County Head Start annual "Munch, Mingle and Move" event held at Clark Elementary School. The theme this year was titled "Around the World with Health and Nutrition." The five countries represented included the United States, Japan, Ethiopia, Italy and Mexico.

Approximately 250 adults and children were in attendance. Christy Reposky, Nutrition Intern for FCCAA WIC, presented a display on "the amounts of sugar in soda." Audience participation of the children counting out the teaspoons of sugar in different sodas, illustrated the large amounts of sugar and calories in a bottle of soda. WIC, HeadStart, and Steps to a Healthier PA presented at the workshop sessions. Twelve display tables from PA Dept. of Health, Healthy Start,

Nurse Family Partnership, Uniontown Hospital Diabetes Center, Private Industry Council, American Heart Association, Steps to a Healthier PA/Fayette, FCCAA WIC, American Dental Association, Girls Scouts of Western PA, Pre-K Counts, and Family Literacy provided educational, outreach and referral information. Families enjoyed a healthy snack and the children participated in a fruit and veggie parade to complete their country tour. ■

RICHMOND CITY (VA) WIC PARTNERSHIP KEEPS CHILDREN LEAD-FREE

By Michael Welch, PhD
Richmond City Health District

It is well documented regarding the detrimental effects that lead has on a child's development. Elevated lead can impair central nervous system development, skeletal system, as well as others. CDC has recently required that children receiving Medicaid shall be screened for elevated blood lead levels (EBLL) at 12 and 24 months. In order to reach this goal, two Richmond City programs – WIC and Lead Safe Richmond – have strengthened their partnership.

Once a week, the weekly WIC appointment schedule is printed and certifications and re-certifications for children are highlighted. Once highlighted, the names are searched in our two Lead Program databases to determine which children are delinquent or are in need of an annual lead test. Once this is completed, a list is prepared with date, time of appointment, and child's name. This list is then mailed to each WIC clinical site within Richmond City. While at the WIC Clinic, after performing a finger stick for Hb testing, a drop of blood is placed on filter paper and mailed to Medtox for analysis. Funds from our CDBG grant allow us to pay for this process.

For the period from July 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009, 609 children have been tested. Of that number, 14 (2.3%) of these children were shown to have EBLLs and were followed up for venous confirmation. In addition, 58 children had blood lead levels between 5 and 9 µg/dl and were contacted regarding safe lead practices. It is through this partnership that two public health programs are working together to ensure a healthy child's development. ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH WIC PROGRAM PROMOTES EXERCISING AT YOUR DESK

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD, Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Valley Health WIC Program has set a goal to promote wellness in the workplace. One method we are using is at each quarterly staff meeting an employee is giving a presentation on a specific wellness topic. At our February staff meeting, WIC Nutritionist Jackie Archer, RD, LD, facilitated an involved and interactive discussion on different exercises we could do in our offices. Since the majority of us are sedentary due to our job duties during the workday, Jackie focused on exercises that we could do sitting in our desk chairs and using bottles of water as weights. The staff participated during the presentation as Jackie acted out each exercise and the WIC staff followed. It was a fun and exciting presentation and shows that we can be active at our desk during the workday. ■



DESK WORK CAN BE ACTIVE — WIC employees practice simple exercises to stay active during the work day. Valley Health Systems WIC Program is promoting an employee wellness program as a method of being positive role models for WIC participants.



LEAD BY EXAMPLE — WIC Nutritionist Jackie Archer promotes wellness in the workplace by showing staff exercises that can be done at their desk.

LINCOLN COUNTY WIC AND STARTING POINTS TEAM TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE EASTER BY PROMOTING HEALTHY EGG RECIPES IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD, Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

On April 7, WIC attended the Lincoln County Starting Points Playgroup to provide nutritional information about eggs just in time for Easter. We discussed the nutritional content, different types of preparation, health benefits, and proper cooking and storing of eggs. We also discussed safe hiding of eggs to avoid harmful bacteria that could get on the egg during Easter egg hunts. At the end of the presentation, families were given an opportunity to make egg salad. Families could choose from three different recipes. The children helped remove the egg shells, mix in the ingredients, and stir the mixture. All of the different recipes were used and the families created excellent dishes of egg salad. ■



EGG-CELLENT — WIC participants all had fun making egg salad.

PUERTO RICO WIC NUTRITIONIST EARNS COLLEGE OF NUTRITIONISTS AND DIETITIANS OF PUERTO RICO AWARD

By Alma L. Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist, Puerto Rico WIC Department

The College of Nutritionists and Dietitians of Puerto Rico recently acknowledged nutrition professionals and physicians that support the nutrition work in Puerto Rico.

Dr. Celia Mir, Past President of the College of Nutritionists and Dietitians of Puerto Rico, said to put passion into life. Thanks were offered to

those who support the nutritionists and dietitians, who as health professionals, help our people. Dr. Mir emphasized the importance of continuing to give awards such as these to validate and recognize the important work done by these professionals.

One of the day's speakers noted that the medical and health professionals are committed to nutrition and the health of the people of Puerto Rico. She thanked the magazine "Buena Vida (Good Life) Magazine" and the Casiano Communications Group, both of which supported this initiative.

Jeanette Canino chairs the Governing Board of the College of Nutritionists and Dietitians of Puerto Rico. She is also the Nutrition Education Coordinator of the Puerto Rico WIC Program. She oversaw the selection of the winners of the Nutrition and Physicians Choice Award. She discussed the passion and impact of these great leaders. She spoke of many unsung heroes, who

are all contributing to improve the health status of the citizens of Puerto Rico.

One of those who received an award was Gueisha Bermudez-Torres, Supervisor of Nutrition in the Ponce WIC Region.

She was honored with the 2009 Presidential Award to the Nutritionist-Dietitian in the Government. ■



PRESENTATION IS EVERYTHING — Addressing the group is Jeanette Canino, President of the Governing Board of the College of Nutritionists and Dietitians. Looking on is a representative from "Buena Vida Magazine."



AWARD WINNER — Gueisha Bermudez-Torres, Supervisor of Nutrition in the Ponce WIC Region (center, holding certificate) was honored with the 2009 Presidential Award for the Nutritionist-Dietitian in the Government. She is surrounded by her WIC co-workers.

Due to a print production oversight, the following two stories did not appear in the printed edition of the Spring MARWIC TIMES. We regret the error.

MEET DELAWARE WIC's NEW EMPLOYEE

By Carolyn Sudler, Management Analyst III

My career started right here in this building (Blue Hen Corp Center, Dover, DE), in 1997 at Aetna Health Care. I worked there as a Claims Benefit Specialist for the Special Project Unit. I was responsible for adjudicating complex health insurance claims. The knowledge I gained from Aetna led me to the State of Delaware, Department of Health and Social Services. In 2004, I was hired as a Medicaid Services Specialist for the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance. My primary responsibility was the management of the Delaware Hospice Program. I was responsible for ensuring eligible Hospice clients were receiving all palliative care benefits available. In May of 2008, I expanded my career to the Department of Labor as a Management Analyst II. I participated in the implementation of the new health care payment system for the Office of Workers' Compensation. Because the health care payment system was new, I had the opportunity to "mold" and create guidelines, policies, and procedures related to the new program.

I have learned a great deal about the WIC Program in the few weeks I have been working here. As a Management Analyst III, I am responsible for the management of the current WIC data system as well as the implementation of a new data system.

I began my training observing at the WIC clinic in Dover. I was very impressed with the staff and their knowledge of the WIC Program. It was very interesting observing the interactions between the Nutritionists/Social Services Technicians and the clientele. While working in such a fast-paced environment, they took the time to educate each client about the new Food Packages that were recently changed.

In getting to know my new co-workers, I discovered the many dedicated years several staff members have invested here. Many have worked for WIC for well over 15 years — that alone says a lot about the WIC Program and what a wonderful place it is to work! I am anxious to begin my journey here and I am looking forward to learning and contributing to the WIC Program, and all aspects of my position, for many years to come. ■



CAROLYN SUDLER

VIRGIN ISLANDS WIC PROGRAM TAKES PART IN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OUTREACH AT THE ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL FAIR IN ST. CROIX

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD

The Annual Agricultural Fair in St. Croix (VI) is held every year in February and it is a place to showcase agricultural produce, such as livestock, plants, local fresh fruits and vegetables and indigenous dishes. This fair has grown now to a big three-day event held on President's Day weekend and many other vendors showcase their wares, including the telephone company and the oil refinery.

This year, the health department, under the theme "Wellness is our way of Life," sponsored a tent and performed health screenings such as cholesterol and blood pressure testing and administering immunization shots. WIC participated with a table providing outreach information about WIC, nutrition education pamphlets and even had a game about guessing portion sizes of popular foods.

More than 50 individuals received information from the WIC table at the fair. ■

**READY, WILLING
AND HIDING —
WIC Nutrition Aide
Linora Perez (hid-
den by sign) holds
up a poster while
preparing WIC's
table at the
Agricultural Fair.**



**PATIENT PEOPLE —
Patrons wait for
services at the
Agricultural Fair.**

PENNSYLVANIA'S SHENANGO VALLEY WIC HERE TO HELP

By Lauriethel Bloodsaw, Retail Store/Outreach Coordinator

Lauriethel Bloodsaw, Retail Store/Outreach Coordinator, represented Shenango Valley WIC at a recent community fair sponsored by Pennsylvania Career-Link of Mercer County. The fair called "Here to Help" was held April 29, at the Hickory VFW in Hermitage, PA. Lauriethel introduced the new foods to be added to the WIC food package effective October 1. It was also a great time to promote the Sesame Street video, "Healthy for Life." The video played at the table on a continuous basis throughout the day promoting low-fat dairy products, increased activity, and more fruits and vegetables. Many new potential clients were drawn to the WIC table. ■



MARYLAND WIC STAFF REFLECTS ON TRAINING: "A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH"

By Cheryl Carter, WIC Services Associate, Lead Harford County (Maryland) WIC Program

In March, I attended another in the series of VENA trainings provided by the Maryland WIC State Agency. Cathy Carothers, BLA, IBCLC, RLC and Kendall Cox, BA, IBCLC, RLC, were the facilitators. Those of us who had the privilege of hearing Cathy Carothers speak about counseling at the 2007 State WIC Conference knew that we were in for a treat.

Cathy and Kendall filled the day with various presentations, discussions, and activities — all with the goal of leading us toward change and enhancement of the certification process for both the staff and clients. They began with a hilarious "In the WIC Salon" skit that creatively focused on change, then moved onto topics such as: "What Was I Thinking?" (the group shared some embarrassing moments), "Critical Thinking," "The Power of Visualization" (we divided into groups and planned an imaginary trip to Maui), "Quality of a Diamond," "Rapport Building," and "Using Probes for Screening."

Everyone appeared to be enjoying the task at hand; however, with each task came a message. My personal favorite was digging for diamonds. The room was filled with dust and excitement from all the digging. As I looked around the room and the dust began to settle, I thought of myself as a certifier with a client whom I am trying to help; and realized that the diamond I was searching for could be within me as well as within the client before me. With each new client a fresh diamond mine is before us. We as certifiers may choose to skim the surface and only take what is apparent — or use rapport building and critical thinking to dig deeper. With a little effort, a beautiful diamond may emerge from within our clients as well as from within ourselves.

Cathy ended the day with a very memorable, heartfelt story which moved many of us to tears. Most would probably agree that she has a way of making you feel like you are there. Both facilitators did a great job through various activities, encouraging us all to start each day fresh and ready for change, while digging for those diamonds. ■



A DAY TO REMEMBER — VENA training facilitators Kendall Cox (left) and Cathy Carothers (right) pause in between training sessions.

DC WIC WORKPLACE PRODUCE CHALLENGE FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

Usually it's not a good thing when you see fruit flies at the workplace. However, it may be a sign that your co-workers are eating fruit. For National Nutrition Month in March, the DC WIC and SNAP team challenged one another to eat two items of produce (fruit/vegetable) during the work day. The team consisted of approximately 20 employees. It was a challenge for some participants since they normally ate just one serving per work day, while others that already ate two per day challenged themselves to eat even more fruits/vegetables and incorporated more variety into their diet.

The produce challenge consisted of three simple steps:

- 1) Sign-up with a produce buddy.
- 2) Eat two items of produce per day. Any form counts (fresh, frozen, canned) and any combination of fruits and vegetables counts.
- 3) Keep track of your progress.

The workplace underwent a slight renovation to motivate everyone to eat healthier. We had pictures of fruits and veggies posted on every office door with a friendly reminder to eat a fruit or vegetable with your meal or snack. The usual candy and other sweets on the office snack table were replaced with fresh fruit at the start of the month. March ended with a lunch celebration. We had homemade vegetable barley soup, fruit and whole-wheat baguettes. At the end of the produce challenge, everyone received a certificate and a survey.

From the survey, we discovered that the most common fruits and vegetables eaten were fresh bananas, apples, pears, grapes, and baby carrots. These did not require any prep time. Other produce consumed included pre-cut party veggie trays, applesauce, dried fruit, salads, V-8 juice, salsa and zucchini fritters.

The survey revealed the following barriers to eating fruits and vegetables at work. The most common chal-

lenge was remembering! Those who forgot their produce had limited options since the neighboring vendors/restaurants usually only offer bananas, oranges, and salads. Other challenges were junk food cravings, eating the same produce everyday, frequent grocery trips, and slight increases in participants' grocery bills.

The following solutions were shared to the aforementioned barriers:

- Replace junk food with healthier options such as substituting popcorn for chips, water for soda, and dark-chocolate for candy.
- Leave 1 produce item at work and bring 1 produce item from home. Bring fruit and store in either refrigerator or desk and then bring in leftover vegetable with lunch.
- Communicate when produce goes on sale.
- Eat lunch together and share recipes and even food.
- Frequent trips to the grocery store — well, we're still working on that. Hopefully, visits to the Farmers' Market will break up that monotony.
- Purchasing more frozen fruits and vegetables (without added sugar or sauces) may be another option to decrease frequent trips to the grocery store.

There was plenty of positive feedback from the produce challenge:

- Some participants lost weight.
- Having a produce buddy helped ("Seeing everyone eat fruits and vegetables around me motivated me to eat healthier.").
- ¾ of participants achieved eating two produce items each day of every work week. While the remainder averaged 3 out of 5 days every week.

All plan to participate in the produce challenge again during the 2010 National Nutrition Month.

All are still trying to eat 2 – 4 produce items daily during the work day. ■

Cinco de Mayo continued from page 1

Preheat oven to 325. Place oats in food processor and pulse until like coarse flour. Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt and process until combined. Transfer mixture to a large bowl. Put beans in food processor and pulse until roughly pureed. Add butter and process until well blended. Add brown sugar, egg, and vanilla and pulse until smooth, scraping down sides of bowl. Pour bean mixture into oats mix and stir by hand. Add remaining ingredients and stir just until blended. Drop large spoonful of dough onto a greased cookie sheet and flatten slightly. Bake 14-15 minutes. Makes 2 dozen.

Bean Brownies

1 (15 oz) can black beans
1 box brownie mix
Open can of beans and do not drain. Puree beans in a blender or food processor until a smooth consistency. In a medium bowl, stir pureed beans into brownie mix. Bake according to directions on brownie mix box.

Italian Style Black Bean Salad

1 (15oz) can black beans, drained
1 clove garlic, minced
2 small zucchini, unpeeled and chopped
1/3 cup Italian salad dressing
1 cup tomato, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup (4oz) Mozzarella or Monterey Jack Cheese, cubed
Mix beans, zucchini, garlic, and dressing in a medium non-metal bowl. Cover and refrigerate for several hours. Add tomato and cheese just before serving. Toss lightly. Serve on a bed of lettuce. Serves 4. ■

VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND WIC INTERNS POST MESSAGES AT DIETETIC MEETING

The dietetic interns from the joint Virginia/Maryland WIC dietetic internship program participated in the Virginia and Maryland Dietetic Association's annual meeting poster sessions. The topic selected for the poster session highlighted the changes in the WIC allowable food package. Maryland interns were Janny Cho, Margaret Eng, Kristen Perry, Frances Ritniski, and Shannon Meadows. ■



MESSAGE DELIVERED — Chloe Devening, a dietetic intern and nutritionist from Virginia's Chesterfield Health District participated in a poster session for the Virginia Dietetic Association Annual Meeting highlighting the changes to the "Allowable Food Package."



NOW SEE THIS — Here's another poster created by the Virginia and Maryland dietetic interns.

DELAWARE WIC PROGRAM IMPLEMENTS NEW WIC FOOD PACKAGES

The Delaware WIC Program sponsored a press conference on March 20, to highlight Delaware's implementation of the new WIC Food Packages.

The press conference was held at the Gateway South Food Lion in Dover, DE. This location was selected to demonstrate their active participation in the implementation of the new food packages. This included purchasing additional produce scales for their stores that will allow WIC participants to easily make healthy and economical produce purchases with their new Cash Value Voucher.

WIC Program Director Joanne White started the event by welcoming attendees to the event and thanking those who made the food package implementation possible. It took the dedication and hard work of all WIC staff members, and the assistance of WIC partners. Among these partners are organizations like Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS), who supported and communicated the food package changes, and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), who have provided food and nutrition education at WIC vendor locations throughout the state and vendors; like the Food Lion. Special thanks to corporate staff for their support and especially the managers and staff of the Gateway South Food Lion who not only supported and participated in the implementation, they provided this wonderful location to highlight the hard work of all involved.

Yvette Jackson, USDA MARO Regional Administrator, recognized Delaware as one of only two states that have implemented the new WIC Food Packages. She highlighted how the changes significantly enhance the nutritional quality of foods available to WIC mothers,

infants and young children, improve access to healthy foods in low-income communities, and provide nutritious food packages that better meet the needs of WIC participants.

Jeseray Huntsman, a Delaware WIC participant, spoke about the healthy options that the new WIC foods packages offer to her and her infant.

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper (US Senate) expressed his support for the WIC Program and the benefits that WIC families receive from the nutrition education and access to healthy foods.

The Honorable Michael N. Castle, (US House of Representatives) reaffirmed his long-standing support for the critical services provided by the WIC Program that he has shown during his time as governor of the State of Delaware and in his active role on the House Education and Workforce Committee that oversees all child nutrition programs.

Gwen B. Angalet, PhD, Managing Director, Nemours Health and Prevention Services recognized the Delaware WIC Program for under-

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- NJ WIC New Food Package Training, Trenton, NJ. July 28.
- New Food Package WV WIC Staff Training. Stonewall Resort. Roanoke WV. August 5-7.
- WV WIC Local Agency Directors' Meeting. Parkersburg, WV. September 1-3.
- WV WIC Outreach Coordinators' Meeting. Flatwoods, WV. September 25.
- NJ WIC National Farmers' Market Conference. Atlantic City, NJ. October 12-16.
- Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE). Denver, CO. October 17- 20.
- The deadline for the Fall issue of MARWIC TIMES is August 10, 2009. Please submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures used. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved as JPGs, please) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

standing the importance of the food package changes and the impact they have. Dr. Angalet emphasized NHPS' commitment to continue working with organizations like WIC that are striving to improve the health of Delawareans.

Frank Weskel, District Manager, Food Lion, LLC, thanked WIC for choosing Food Lion to showcase the importance of vendor partnerships in the WIC Program and for the hard work of the Gateway South Food Lion managers and staff in putting together this event.

The response to the event was overwhelmingly positive. Those who attended were impressed and excited to learn more about the new WIC Food Packages from WIC Program staff, USDA officials, and federal legislators. They had an opportunity to learn more about WIC partners, EFNEP and NHPS and to see a beautiful display of the new WIC food packages.

Kudos to the Delaware WIC Program staff members for the hard work that resulted in the new WIC Food Package implementation. ■



DELAWARE WIC IS SUPER IN THE MARKET — Recognizing Delaware WIC's implementation of the new WIC Food Packages are (left to right) Gwen B. Angalet, PhD, Managing Director, Nemours Health and Prevention Services; Joanne White, Delaware WIC Program Director; Frank Weskel, District Manager, Food Lion, LLC; Jeseray Huntsman, WIC breastfeeding mother and her daughter Addison; The Honorable Michael N. Castle, US House of Representatives; Yvette Jackson, USDA MARO Regional Administrator; and The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, US Senate.

WEST VIRGINIA'S WHEELING-OHIO WIC PRODUCES A WINNER

Wheeling-Ohio WIC families were encouraged to have their children express their artistic side by drawing or painting for the National WIC Association's 2009 Nutrition Education Calendar children's art competition. Children were urged to send multiple entries in any art media including crayon, paint, colored pencil or marker.

Judah Turner, age 6, who received WIC services from the Wetzel/Tyler WIC Program, was selected as a runner-up prize winner in the 2009 NWA Calendar Children's Drawing Competition. His artwork is featured in both the wall and pocket calendars. The National WIC Association had received more than 300 entries from children across the country. As noted in the congratulatory letter to mother, Jessica Turner, the calendars have the potential to reach over a million WIC families! Judah's creativity will be enjoyed by an overwhelming number of WIC families.

Judah was awarded a \$50 gift basket from Scholastic, Inc., as well as three sample copies of the wall and pocket calendars to share with family and friends. Judah enjoys sports, with baseball and soccer being his favorites. He has interest in continuing his artwork as well as following in his father's footsteps to become a pastor "when he grows up." ■



DA VINCI OR MONET? — Judah Turner, age 6, was a runner-up prize winner of the 2009 NWA Calendar Children's Drawing Competition. Judah is pictured with his mom, Jessica, and sisters, Simone and Nadina. He also has an older sister, Eden.

PUERTO RICO WIC OPENS AIBONITO WIC CLINIC

By Alma L. Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist, Puerto Rico WIC

The participants of the Aibonito WIC Clinic, after receiving their services in trailers for three years, enjoyed the grand opening of the new WIC facilities in March.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was orchestrated by Carmen Caballero, Liaison Coordinator for Puerto Rico WIC; Rita Rivera, WIC Clinic Nutritionist; Awilda Rodriguez, Caguas WIC Region Director; and Carmen Olivera, Nutrition Supervisor, Caguas WIC Region. Those in attendance included representatives from the Demographic Registration Office, Environmental Health Office of Aibonito, and the WIC Clinic Staff.

Ms. Rivera recognized the WIC staff for their hard work in moving and setting up the office to be ready to receive participants in the new facility. WIC staff members joined in the opening-day events, including participating in musical performances.

The Mayor of Aibonito also participated in the day's events. In his message, he called for the WIC Clinic to be part of the community activities, which are overseen by the Office of the First Lady.

Projections of future development in this clinic include planting a fruit and vegetable garden for children, in coordination with other community agencies. ■



RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY — Pictured (left to right) are Carmen Olivera, Environment Health Officer; Demographic Region Officer of Aibonito; Rita Rivera, Nutritionist; (back) Awilda Rodriguez, Caguas WIC Region Director; and Carmen Caballero, Liaison Coordinator of the PR WIC Program.



MORE RIBBON-CUTTING — The Mayor of Aibonito (third from right) joins Aibonito WIC Clinic Staff, WIC Regional and Central Office staff at the ribbon-cutting festivities.



SPACIOUS SPACE — Rita Rivera, Nutritionist for the Aibonito WIC Clinic, admires the spacious nutrition office.

"CUCUMBER" WATER! — A REAL HIT OF THE DAY AT PA'S FAYETTE COUNTY WIC

By Betty Zackal, WIC Director and Outreach Coordinator

On May 14, Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc., (FCCAA) WIC Program of Uniontown, PA, began the preliminary instruction on the new food package. As the moms and children came into the waiting room, they were greeted by Christy Reposky, nutrition intern, who offered them a cool glass of cucumber water. The clear glass pitcher of tap water with slices of cucumber and ice provided the WIC participants with a refreshing drink as they waited to be called for their appointment. WIC Director Betty Zackal said the new flavored water was well received by the moms and the kids!

Christy held a repetitive class for more than 20 families on the upcoming new foods telling moms about the whole grain breads, brown rice, wheat tortillas, fruits and vegetables, soy beverage, and tofu. Some moms were sad to learn about the changes regarding whole milk and cheese. Christy emphasized the new additions, which seemed to make all moms very happy. Pregnant moms were very thrilled with the information on the addition of baby foods to their upcoming WIC checks.

Materials distributed that day included handouts on water facts and MyPyramid coloring sheets. Cartons and wrappings of a few of the new foods were displayed. A bulletin board display showed the connection of the new foods to MyPyramid and announcing October 1 as the start date of the new food package. Christy is a student at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) in the RD program. Fayette County WIC appreciated her work and the introduction of the new food package for the Uniontown WIC families. ■



CHRISTY REPOSKY

FALLEN ANGEL MAKING A COMEBACK IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Mitch Greenbaum, WIC Director, Shenandoah Medical Systems WIC Program

Every now and then, when I get bogged down with the cares of this world and the inherent stress that comes with being a member of the WIC community, I reflect on the goodness that surrounds me; my staff, serving the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.

It certainly has been a strange and long journey that has brought this man from The Bronx, New York, to the mountains of West Virginia. For the past 11 years I have had the privilege of working alongside extraordinary women as they provide services to the country's most at-risk population. I would like to share a few words about one of the WIC Program's special people.

Dottie Reid came to Shenandoah Valley WIC in 2003 and quickly gave our Ranson, WV office a needed dose of high energy personality. Her years in nursing and raising five children made her a natural at the Medical Aide/Breastfeeding Peer Counselor position. During the next few years, the Ranson office enjoyed the largest percentage of growth in my agency. I remember in August, 2007, at the end of a great State training conference, I struggled to gather my staff for a group picture. In that picture, was Dottie's daughter, Katie who now works in my Martinsburg office.

Two months later, on October 13, 2007, I received a telephone call informing me that Dottie was involved in a tragic accident involving a four-wheel ATV and was not expected to pull through. When I visited her in hospital the next day, I was discouraged to see her lying there hooked up to

life support. For two months her family kept vigil at the hospital while Dottie lied in a comatose state. Anyone who attends a WIC gathering knows that its people are people of faith. Many prayers ascended to our Creator on behalf of Dottie and she eventually came out of her coma.

Today, that group picture now hangs in her room at the Care Haven Nursing Home where Dottie continues to improve. She told me that she has "all her brain power" back and looks forward to coming back to work. I told her she still needs to learn how to walk again, but as I walked alongside side her wheelchair and interacted with the nurse's aides, I realized that Dottie was still working for WIC. For the aides told me that Dottie had helped them to breastfeed when they had their babies. Dottie also wears a badge around her neck. It states that she is "Prayer Angel." This summer, Dottie will greet her 13th and 14th grandchildren. I'd say that this Angel is making a comeback! ■



DOTTIE REID and MITCH GREENBAUM

VIRGINIA'S PENINSULA HEALTH DISTRICT CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

Peninsula Health District (VA) celebrated its WIC breastfeeding mothers at an event entitled "Mother's Day Celebration." The event, held May 7 at the Peninsula Health Center Auditorium in Newport News, was planned and executed by Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Chasity Newton, Loctina Santiful, and Tammy Watlington.

We also had two of our WIC breastfeeding mom volunteers who had recently completed the Loving Support Course at our district — Erin Arsenault and Sarah Warner — to assist with all the festivities. Sarah, a certified infant massage therapist and future Doula, was a guest speaker. Erin Arsenault, a scrap-booking WIC mom, completed a scrapbook photo for every WIC mother with her infant/child and in a few cases her significant other.

Janet Hutchens and Katie Rosenbaum from Virginia Cooperative Extension- EFNEP Early Family Nutrition Education Program and SNAP Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program, presented healthy snack ideas for moms and their young children. Lastly, District Breastfeeding Coordinator Leslie Fain presented an article about flu and the recent H1N1 flu in regards to our breastfeeding mothers and their infants.

Donated refreshments included fruit punch, pretzels with cheese dip, cookies and cake. Other donations for the event included handcrafted flora pens courtesy of Destyne' Lilliston, a youth volunteer. Each attendee received a Mother's Day card made by the peer counselors, a single fresh rose and a food box consisting of dry goods donated by a local grocery store.

Here at the Peninsula Health District, we are very proud of our WIC breastfeeding mothers, Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, breastfeeding volunteers, and the community agency partnerships for their support of WIC Breastfeeding program. ■



A GREAT DAY FOR ALL — WIC staffers and volunteers alike enjoyed the day's festivities. Pictures here (left to right) are Loctina Santiful, Erin Arsenault, Chasity Newton and Sarah Warner.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY WIC PROGRAM PROMOTES FARMERS' MARKET

By Candis Sines-Westerberg
ME Allegheny County Health Department

These two colorful bulletin boards created by the Allegheny County WIC Program remind participants of the benefits of eating Farmers' Market fruits and vegetables. ■



MARYLAND WIC TAKES A TRIP THROUGH THE DIAMOND MINES: INVITING CHANGE AND REDISCOVERING VENA

By Elizabeth Gabriel, Nutrition Counselor and Julie Ruel-Bergeron, Clinic Manager CCI Montgomery County (Maryland) WIC Program

What does mining for diamonds have to do with VENA training? More than one might think. This year's Maryland VENA training – Mining for Diamonds: Using Critical Thinking to Move Toward Change – was different. Facilitated by the energetic and creative Cathy Carothers and Kendall Cox, it was a day full of planning vacations to Maui, sharing embarrassing stories, and learning how to mine diamonds in our own everyday WIC lives. WIC staff was taught to accept change and use critical thinking skills, and integrate both to become the best WIC nutrition counselors possible.

Cathy and Kendall used a variety of interactive and hands-on teaching methods including a skit, group discussions and activities, brain teasers, and personal stories. One of the favorites and most relevant was when Cathy shared her experience about a family outing to go mining for diamonds, just a short drive away from her home, at Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. The topic of the diamond was well-chosen and it became the perfect analogy for our interaction with WIC clients. The qualities of the diamond – its beauty, uniqueness, diversity, strength, and fragility – are reflected in everyone who is involved in WIC, be it our staff or our clients, and this focus helped us gain a better understanding of how to approach and get the most out of our interactions with one another.

By the end of the day, WIC staff was able to walk away from the VENA training with a comprehensive understanding of how to engage WIC clients in a client-focused counseling session. Using simple, yet effective counseling techniques such as building rapport, affirming, asking open-ended questions, and probing enables clients to recognize their needs. Cathy and Kendall were able to not only give WIC staff a thorough understanding of how mining for diamonds relates to the VENA approach for counseling WIC clients, but also a better appreciation for the clients themselves. Seeing the big picture and thinking outside the box are much more important than simply telling clients "you're not doing this, and you need to do that." Sometimes things may not appear to be what they seem, and the best way to crack some of those tough shells is by refraining from judging or jumping to conclusions, and rather, digging a little to discover what else is there. By putting forth this extra effort, we can turn an average nutrition counseling session into a Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment, a.k.a. VENA! ■



MARYLAND WIC STAFF "MINING FOR DIAMONDS" — Allegany County and Garrett County (top photo) and Johns Hopkins (bottom photo) staff.



NEW JERSEY'S ST. JOSEPH WIC MAKES MOST OF STAFF MEETINGS

By Dori Monica, St. Joseph Regional Medical Center WIC Program

All St. Joseph (NJ) WIC staff attends monthly staff meetings. The meeting is divided into two sessions – a morning and an afternoon session. The morning session includes business, in-services, Employee of the Month award and a nutrition presentation for all staff. In the afternoon session, staff breaks out into groups dependent upon their job responsibilities. The topics discussed are related to the job. The nutrition topic presented at the last meeting was on fiber. Information on fiber and recipes containing fiber were shared. Staff was able to sample high-fiber snacks baked by one of the nutritionists. Participant Improvement surveys are used to select the Employee of the Month. Each month the employee whose name is mentioned the most times on the survey as the employee who was most helpful, received the award.

Twice a year, staff has a luncheon. A diversity luncheon is shared in February. Each staff member brings in food from their culture to share with others. In May, one of the staff members plans, purchases and brings in food for a Mother's Day Luncheon. All staff contributes a small amount of money to cover the cost of food and a small gift. After the meal, each person draws a name. The first person gets up and says something nice about the person whose name she has drawn and gives that person a small gift. The person who received the gift has to do the same for the person whose name she has drawn. This continues until everyone has been honored and receives a gift. ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH VALLEY WIC PROGRAM PROMOTES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH WITH "MOOOVE TO LOWFAT MILK"

By Karen Korzep, Shenandoah Valley WIC Program Nutritionist

Promotion of National Nutrition Month received a boost in West Virginia's Shenandoah Valley from the Carlos and Clarice "Mooove to Lowfat Milk!" campaign. This 22-page children's book emphasizes the importance of drinking 1% lowfat and fat-free milk. The book was the foundation of WIC group nutrition education and was distributed to children as a way to introduce transition to lowfat dairy foods.

A food tasting demonstration and an informational display were also offered in the lobby of the Shenandoah Community Health Center in an effort to share lowfat dairy food nutrition information along with WIC Program public awareness materials. The community took advantage of a parfait made with lowfat strawberry yogurt and multigrain Cheerios® garnished with fresh strawberries, lowfat cheese quesadillas, celery with lowfat cream cheese, and lowfat milk.

"It seems participants are paying more attention to how much milk their children are drinking and are more aware of their intake of sugary drinks," shared Shenandoah Valley Nutritionist Karen Korzep. Nutrition education and office bulletin boards have new appeal with "Mooove to Lowfat Milk!" materials. The Shenandoah Valley WIC Program plans to continue to focus on nutrition messages of reduced fat milk, rethinking your drink and sometimes foods versus any-time foods as part of the new WIC food packages implementation. ■



"MOOOVE TO LOWFAT MILK!" — The West Virginia WIC Program has adopted the use of this 22-page children's book to emphasize the importance of drinking reduced fat milk.



CAN YOU GUESS? — Shenandoah Valley WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Katie Reid offers a milk tasting demonstration.

WEST VIRGINIA'S RANDOLPH-ELKINS WIC PROMOTES "CAP CHALLENGE"

By Cindy Haney
Randolph-Elkins WIC Program
Nutrition Education Liaison

Creating a fun and unique way to keep participants interested in nutrition education classes has been a goal of West Virginia's Randolph-Elkins WIC Program. We challenge all of our participants to choose lowfat milk and dairy products as part of a healthy diet. In order to reward positive behavior changes and healthier dietary choices, participants can enter our "CAP Challenge."

Clients who purchase a lesser fat milk may return the milk cap to WIC to be entered into a contest to win a 5½- quart stainless steel crock pot. The CAP challenge began in February and continued until the end of June. We will be giving away nine crock pots throughout our eight county regions. Participants may enter as many times as they purchase and submit the lower fat milk caps. The giveaway is taking place every six weeks through our three main offices and has been a delightful addition to nutrition education classes.

As the nutrition education class continues, participants are growing an increased awareness and excitement about the giveaway. Participants are anxious about the prospect of winning such a practical, upscale gift! Participant involvement is also increased. For instance, the Buckhannon office had more than 30 caps submitted for the May 8 drawing. Advertisement of the challenge includes displays in the office lobby, announcement in nutrition education classes, posters, etc. ■



PRACTICAL REWARDS — Kitty Riley (right) was the first winner of the Randolph-Elkins WIC Program "CAP Challenge." Nutrition Assistant, Kristi Sears (left) presents the first of nine crock pot rewards.

NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING WEEK

By Anita Otokiti, WIC Director Trinitas Hospital

New Jersey's Trinitas Hospital WIC Breastfeeding Services hosted an educational session during last year's World Breastfeeding Week. The theme, "Mother Support: Going for the Gold," was promoted in all the WIC sites and services of the hospital. The gold represents the best effort an individual or entity makes in supporting breastfeeding women. The official Olympics symbol of five interlocking colored rings are ideal for describing five circles of support for breastfeeding. These circles illustrate the potential influences on a mother's decision to breastfeed and to have a positive breastfeeding experience.

Mothers and infants were honored with gifts and blankets from Project Linus, water bottles and bags. Forty-five mothers were presented with "Certificates of Recognition" for their dedication to breastfeeding. Each guest received a gold ribbon corsage.

WIC breastfeeding staff presented information on breastfeeding services. Mary Turbek, RN, IBCLC, NJ State WIC Breastfeeding Representative, was present and agreed, "that mothers need a lot of support and confidence for a positive breastfeeding experience." Miriam Ruchman, IBCLC, explained about the different circles of support for breastfeeding. Tawana Jackson, IBCLC, addressed the benefits of breastfeeding, breastfeeding aids and other material. Lactation Instructor Claudia Lopez and Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Riasa Herrera assisted with the presentations.



(Back row, right to left) Lactation Instructor Claudia Meulle, Supervisor Maribel Solano, and NJWIC Lactation Specialist Mary Turbek; (front row, right to left) Peer Counselor Riasa Herrera and Lactation Instructors Tawana Jackson and Miriam Ruchman.

NJ WIC uses the Love and Support model that encourages Breastfeeding Counselors to provide basic breastfeeding education and support. Lactation Instructors/Consultants are available to assist women with problems, positioning and latch-on techniques. Bi-lingual staff is available and information in other languages is also available. Weekly classes and support group meetings are held for the breastfeeding women. ■



Mothers received certificates of Recognition for their dedication.



Breastfeeding Education Sessions are provided to all pregnant women.

PENNSYLVANIA'S FAYETTE COUNTY WIC PARTICIPATES IN 12TH ANNUAL FAYETTE COUNTY MOM AND DAD'S SHOWER

By Betty Zackal, FCCAA WIC Director and Outreach Coordinator.

Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) of Uniontown, PA, participated in the 12th Annual Mom and Dad's Shower on May 6, at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. Fifty-one new moms or pregnant moms and nine dads attended the event. The WIC table presentation included bean cookbooks that were a hit at the event. The local Medela representative distributed breastfeeding promotional items. Mary J. Hepburn, Breastfeeding Coordinator and Nutrition Education Coordinator, and Betty Zackal, WIC Director and Outreach Coordinator, were able to spend time talking to the moms, taking new WIC applications, promoting breastfeeding and promoting the nutritional value of beans.

The WIC personnel were able to network with the 19 other area agencies that also had table presentations. These included: Fayette County Nurse Family Partnership, Fayette County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Fayette County MH/MR (Early Intervention), Fayette Literacy Council, Fayette OB/GYN, Fayette County Early Head Start/Head Start, Healthy Start, Inc., High Mark BCBS-CHIP, Laurel Pediatrics, PA Pre-Counts (PIC), New Meadow Run, Alternatives-Yes, Fayette County Penn State Cooperative Extension, Unison Health Plan, Penn State Fayette (Admissions Office), Southwest Women's Healthcare, Inc., The Center for Hope, SPSHS Step by Step Child Development Program: Diversified Human Services, and The Uniontown Hospital Family Beginnings/Lactation Consultants. Two vendors, a makeup company and a toy store, had table presentations with give-a-ways for the moms. All agencies donated diapers and some gifts for a prize drawing. There were 14 other donors who contributed to support the shower.

Workshops included presentations on Nursing Bottle Syndrome by an area dentist, "How to discipline your child in a positive manner" by Dads Matter of Fayette County, and "Dr. Karp's Happy Baby" by Fayette County Nurse Family Partnership. A lunch was served and gifts were distributed. ■



TWO FAIR LADIES — Representing the FCCAA WIC Program for the agency fair were Mary J. Hepburn, Breastfeeding Coordinator and Nutrition Education Coordinator, and Betty Zackal, WIC Director and Outreach Coordinator.

MID-OHIO VALLEY WIC PROGRAM THANKS THE CITY OF VIENNA, WEST VIRGINIA

The city of Vienna, WV has proven to be an invaluable partner to the Mid-Ohio Valley WIC Program. Since 2006, the city has offered the use of the community center at no cost as a host site for a satellite WIC clinic. This has allowed for greater participant access. Now the city has built a room in the Jackson Park community building specifically for conducting health screenings as part of the WIC Program.

During a city council meeting, Dick Wittberg, Director of the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department, said the health department is grateful the city is continuing to provide the space. "You guys went and remodeled the Jackson Park community building and you went to the trouble of building a room for our WIC Program. We're so thrilled that you would think of us on this."

Wittberg said WIC is a valuable resource for the community. "I do think it's a good resource for the community. I'm a big believer in the WIC Program," he said. Enrollment in the WIC Program has grown recently. The economy may be driving up the numbers, but Wittberg said, "Our enrollment has grown, but it was growing before the economy went south."

Mayor David C. Nohe said the city was glad to help the Program. ■

PUERTO RICO WIC OFFERS NEW STRATEGIES FOR FMNP ACCESSIBILITY

By Alma Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist, Puerto Rico WIC Program

Personnel services of the Administration of Agricultural Development (ASDA), Marketing Program Department of Agriculture of the Government of Puerto Rico offered a detailed training for Regional Directors of the Puerto Rico WIC Program and other related staff in the headquarters of the Puerto Rico WIC Program.

The emphasis this fiscal year will be channeling the delivery of the checkbook for WIC participants using the communication lines of Regional Directors to its WIC clinics.

This strategy projects increased accessibility of services to the participants and increased the number of beneficiaries of the fruits and vegetables grown and sold through the Puerto Rico Farmers' Markets.

We acknowledge the work of each WIC clinics' staff and its commitment to carry out the agreements between the Department of Health, the WIC Program and the Department of Agriculture of the Government of Puerto Rico. ■



DETAILS, DETAILS – Agronomist Karen Acevedo and Marketing Officer Rosa Torrens explain the details of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program FY 2009 checks for WIC participants to Gueisha Bermudez, Nutrition Supervisor of WIC Ponce Region; and Hector Rivera, Bayamon WIC Region Director.

VIRGINIA BEACH (VA) WIC REACHES OUT

By Lisa Anderson, WIC Coordinator
Virginia Beach



REACHING OUT FOR CHILDREN — Virginia Beach WIC participated in Celebrating Children, an event held on April 25 at Mount Trashmore. More than 1500 people attended the occasion, which included many activities for children, including a 1.2 mile run around the track. It was fun, but HOT!! ■



New Jersey State Department of Health - WIC
PO Box 364
Trenton, NJ 08625-0364